

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O 251807Z JUL 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2998  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T HELSINKI 2387

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PARM, PCAT, UR, US  
SUBJ: US-SOVIET CAT: REPORTING CABLE ON FIRST MEETING OF  
REGIONAL WORKING GROUP, JULY 21, 1978

BEGIN SUMMARY: REGIONAL GROUP OFF TO SLOW START DUE  
SOVIET SUSPICION OF US MOTIVES IN PROPOSING REGIONAL DISCUS-  
SION AND THEIR UNPREPAREDNESS FOR SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGE. US  
ATTEMPTED ALLAY SUSPICIONS AND SUCCEEDED IN EXTRACTING  
SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF WORKING PAPER, WHICH APPEARED  
CLARIFY SOME SOVIET DOUBTS, AND AGREEMENT TO GET DOWN TO  
SPECIFICS ON LATIN AMERICA AT NEXT MEETING. END SUMMARY

1. REGIONAL WORKING GROUP (RWG) HELD FIRST MEETING  
JULY 21 WITH US SIDE CHAIRED BY DR. MATHEWS AND SOVIET  
SIDE BY KUZNETSOV (FOREIGN MINISTRY). MATHEWS BEGAN BY  
REITERATING OBJECTIVES US SAW FOR RWG, AS SET FORCH IN  
DRAFT WORKING PAPER ON REGIONAL APPROACH GIVEN TO SOVIETS  
EARLIER. WE SAW THESE AS SMALL STEPS AIMED AT ENCOURAGING  
RECEPIENT RESTRAINT IN LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA AND  
STEMMING DIRECTLY FROM PROGRAM OF ACTION AGREED UPON AT  
SSOD. MATHEWS ASKED IF SOVIETS HAD QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS  
ON THESE OBJECTIVES FOR THE GROUP.

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2. KUTZNETSOV AVOIDED ALL DIRECT DISCUSSION OF OBJECTIVES.  
HE SAID SOVIETS HAD SOME DOUBTS ABOUT VALUE OF VWG  
AT THIS INITIAL STAGE OF CAT. THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH  
PROGRESS IN OTHER TWO WORKING GROUPS, BUT CRITERIA WERE  
NOT YET AGREED UPON AND UNTIL AGREEMENT REACHED IT WAS  
UNREALISTIC TO BUILD SUPERSTRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION  
OF CRITERIA. HE OFFERED HIS PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

"OFF THE RECORD." SOVIETS HAD IMPRESSION US SIDE, WHILE SINCERELY SEEKING PROGRESS, WAS EXCESSIVELY PERSISTENT AND SHOWED SIGNS OF BEING IN TOO MUCH OF A HURRY. FOR 30 YEARS, KUZNETSOV SAID, WORLD HAS SEEN UNCONTROLLED PROLIFERATION OF ARMS, IN WHICH US PLAYED LEADING ROLE, AND NOW US WANTS SOLVE PROBLEM IN A FEW WEEKS. SUCH AN IMPRESSION OF PRESSURE BEING EXERTED IN CONTEXT OF CURRENT SOVIET-US RELATIONS COULD ONLY COMPLICATE PROCESS OF REACHING DECISIONS IN MOSCOW. BUT AS SIGN OF GOOD WILL, SOVIETS READY PROCEED EVEN AT THIS STAGE TO CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL ASPECTS.

3. MATHEWS RESPONDED US DID NOT FEEL IT WAS MOVING TOO FAST, SAID STEPS WE PROPOSED WERE SMALL, MANAGE-ABLE AND WOULD IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES ALREADY AGREED UPON, AND NOTED US HAD SIGNALLED AT LAST ROUND IT WOULD BE PREPARED DISCUSS LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA AT THIS ROUND. SHE ELABORATED ON US REASONS FOR CHOOSING THOSE TWO REGIONS IN EFFORT ALLAY SOVIET SUSPICIONS. KUZNETSOV SAID HE WOULD COMMENT LATER ON US MOTIVES AND PROCEEDED ASK LONG SERIES OF QUESTIONS UNRELATED TO THE TWO REGIONS AND IN SOME CASES UNRELATED TO CAT, IN APPARENT ATTEMPT STALL SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION. AMONG QUESTIONS: WHY US HAD NOT CHOSEN OTHER REGIONS, WHY IT HAD NOT CONSIDERED INDIAN OCEAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN (VIETNAMESE) ZONES OF PEACE PROPOSALS, WHETHER WE TOOK INTO ACCOUNT EXISTENCE  
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OF MILITARY BLOCS SUCH AS CENTO AND POTENTIAL SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY, WHETHER EXCEPTIONS TO OVERALL POLICY ANNOUNCED IN PD 13 WOULD APPLY TO CAT (WE SAID THEY WOULD).

4. DISCUSSION BECAME MORE CONSTRUCTIVE WHEN KUZNETSOV FINALLY TURNED TO DISCUSSION OF WORKING PAPER (AFTER US HAD INSISTED ON PROLONGING MEETING). HE ACCEPTED SUGGESTION THAT RWG EXAMINE HOW PROPOSED CRITERIA WOULD APPLY TO SPECIFIC REGIONAL SITUATIONS, AND PROPOSED WE DO THAT FOR LATIN AMERICA AT NEXT MEETING. HE ASKED MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS AND WE BELIEVE WE WERE ABLE RESOLVE SOME POINTS THAT WERE IN FACT UNCLEAR TO SOVIETS. MAIN SOVIET CONCERNS APPEARED BE WHETHER (1) WE WERE ATTEMPTING IN SOME WAY TO DENY OR WEAKEN UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF CRITERIA, ESPECIALLY POLITICAL/LEGAL CRITERIA, VIA REGIONAL APPROACH, AND (2) WHETHER WE WERE ATTEMPTING TO DENY ARMS TO "VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION." MATHEWS SAID NO TO BOTH QUESTIONS, NOTING ON LATTER THAT PROPOSAL WAS TO REGULATE ARMS TRANSFERS, NOT ELIMINATE THEM. THAT DID NOT MEAN WE WOULD TRANSFER ANY QUANTITY OF ARMS, AT ANY LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION, EVEN TO VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION. MEETING ENDED ON POSITIVE TONE

WITH AGREEMENT TO DISCUSS LATIN AMERICA JULY 24.

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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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